

THE CHILD AT HOME

OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

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THE YOUNG BASKET-MAKER.

TOM and MARY were orphans, living in a humble cottage in England. Their father had been a basket-maker; and, before he died, Aunt Margaret, dear good aunt, promised him, that, when Tom was old enough, he should learn his father's trade. She has kept her word, and Tom is making a good beginning. Would you like to read what a good friend said to him about basket-making? —

"Now, Tom, while you are going on with your osier-weaving, I will talk a little about the art you are beginning to practice, and which, no doubt, is one of the earliest manufactures known. I can not tell you who was the first basket-maker; but we read about baskets in the very oldest book in the world, — the Book of Genesis, which, you know, is

the first in the Bible. There we are told that Pharaoh's chief baker dreamed of having three white baskets on his head, the uppermost being full of baked meats for the king. Then you remember that the mother of Moses made an ark, or a basket, of bulrushes, to put her little baby in when she was obliged to obey the cruel order of the wicked king, hoping that by some means or other, in God's providence, her poor child would be saved. And so indeed it was; and very thankful the mother must afterwards have been to think that she had learned to weave rushes into baskets, and that God put it into her mind to turn her skill to such good account.

"Do you remember too, Tom, how a good servant of Jesus Christ was delivered out of the hand of his enemies, who wanted to kill him, by being let

down from the high wall of Damascus one night in a basket?

"There is not a more ancient art in Britain, Tom, than that of basket-making; at least, you may challenge any one to show you an older. It was practiced in the earliest times of which we have any account, — even when the natives went about half-dressed in skins, and having their bodies painted or stained to keep off the cold. Their huts were often a sort of basket-work; and so were the boats they used on the rivers. They called these basket-boats coracles, and covered them with skins to make them water-tight. Another use (or rather misuse) to which the ancient Britons put their skill in basket-making is very shocking to think of. Every now and then, they made great baskets in the shape of a man. Clumsy enough they were, no doubt; but they were strong. I do not know how many yards high, or how big round, they were; but they were large enough to hold a number of men, women, and children. And, when the strange-looking basket was made, the Britons, who were heathens, and knew nothing of the true God, and his great mercy and love in sending his dear Son into the world to save sinners, — these heathen Britons put their poor prisoners of war into them. Then they heaped fagots and logs of wood round the horrible-looking basket, and set fire to the murderous pile. The poor inclosed victims were soon suffocated with the smoke of the burning wood, and then were consumed along with their basket-prison. Ah, little Polly! you would not like to help make such a cruel basket as that, however much you like handing the osiers to Tom while he is at work.

"I should tell you, Tom and Mary, that the people who made such horrible basket-work thought that their false gods would be pleased with such inhuman sacrifices. But we know better than this; for we have the gospel, which teaches us to be merciful because God is merciful."

CHILDREN'S DUTIES.

BY AUNT EMMA.

What is a duty? Something we ought to do. Children, then, have duties as well as grown people.

How do grown people find out their duties? By reading the Bible, God's holy word, in which he tells them very particularly what they must do.

Can children find out their duties there? Certainly they can. The good God has taken pains to tell the little ones also what he expects of them; and he has done it so plainly, that the youngest who is able to understand any thing need not make any mistake.

"Let me know what it is," says the good, docile child, "and I will try very hard to do it; for I love the good God, and I want to please him. I will do every thing he tells me, if I possibly can."

If you possibly can, dear child? Do you think the good God directs you to do any thing you can not do?

Does he not know just what you can and what you can't do? He will not expect too much of you, you may be sure.

"Well, then, tell me just what he wants me to do, and I will do it."

That sounds just right. Now I am satisfied. So is God himself; for all he wishes is, that you hear his word, and obey it. Turn, then, to Prov. i. 8, and read there the first duty which God requires of every little child. No matter that it begins "My son;" it means my daughter too. It is the same as if he had said, "My child." Now, what is it you are to do? "Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." I don't believe there are any words by which I can make that plain-er to you. You know what it means very well. It is exactly what the fifth commandment means, — that you are to listen with attention and respect to all your parents say to you, and to obey them in every thing.

Some children listen to what their parents say, but not with respect; for they turn away, and say, "Isn't it real mean? Father won't let me go here, and mother won't let me do this. It's too bad! Billy Mills's father lets him go, and Mary Brown's mother lets her do so and so. It's a shame! I know what I'll do when I am grown up." Did you ever hear children talk so? They were boys and girls that were not doing their duty. Can such children please God?

I would like to ask you, my little reader, did you ever say such words, or think such thoughts? for thinking the thoughts is as bad as saying the words. If you ever did, repent, ask God to forgive you, and from this hour begin to do your duty; that is, to listen to all your parents say to you with attention and respect, and quietly, cheerfully, and promptly obey.

God offers a reward to the little people who thus do their duty. Doing duty always brings reward to everybody, young or old; but God has offered a special reward to children who are dutiful. You will read what it is in the next verse: "For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." In the old Bible-times, necklaces and coronets were considered very precious; and the persons adorned with them, very beautiful. So that the verse means, that the child who does this duty (that is, who honors and obeys the parent) will appear very lovely, and will be very much esteemed.

Now, there is not a boy or girl who reads these lines but would like to appear well before other people, but would be pleased to have friends and acquaintances say, "What a sweet child! what a fine, manly boy! what a pleasant, good girl!" We all desire to be agreeable to others; we all like to have our neighbors like us; we all are pleased to have people commend us. And it is the same with children. Now, here is the way in which you little folks can make yourselves lovely in the eyes of all around you; and their esteem and praise will be a part of the reward which you receive. It is only a part, however. God himself will look down with pleasure upon every dutiful child, and will smile with approbation, — a smile which, dear child, if you only knew it, would make you rich and happy and lovely for ever.

But now there is another duty which God requires of you. You will find that laid out in the next verse: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." You know what that means, don't you? It is, that you must avoid all evil associates. You know which are the evil associates. They are those who do not fear God, but who take his name in vain, break his day, disobey his command, and have no regard for the heaven he has promised, or the hell he has threatened. People who know tell us that there are two roads that lead more straight than any others to the prison and to hell; and these are disobedience to parents, and going with

wicked companions. Now, can you not see why God, the good God as we love to call him, has made these two duties so very plain to all the children? He loves you, and desires that you may be saved from sin and sorrow, and made holy and happy for ever; and therefore he has given you these two plain, simple rules.

Now, my little child, who said so eagerly at the first, "Tell me just what God wants me to do, and I will do it," are you ready for your duty? Do you mean to do it? Do you intend to begin this very day and hour? You are one, then, that I shall be sure to meet some day in heaven; for no child ever sincerely tried to obey and please God, who did not find the way, through Jesus, to that blessed world. Yes, I shall meet you in heaven, and there, I am sure you will tell me that you are glad and thankful that you learned and did your duties here.



OVER IN THE MEADOW; OR, THE RHYMES BY WHICH MAMMA TAUGHT TOT TO COUNT 12.

BY OLIVE A. WADSWORTH.

Over in the meadow,
In the sand, in the sun,
Lived an old mother-toad
And her little toadie one.
"Wink!" said the mother;
"I wink," said the one:
So she winked and she blinked
In the sand, in the sun.



Over in the meadow,
Where the stream runs blue,
Lived an old mother-fish
And her little fishes two.
"Swim!" said the mother;
"We swim," said the two:
So they swam and they leapt
Where the stream runs blue.



Over in the meadow,
In a hole in a tree,
Lived a mother-bluebird
And her little birdies three.

"Sing!" said the mother.
"We sing," said the three:
So they sang, and were glad,
In the hole in the tree.



Over in the meadow,
In the reeds on the shore,
Lived a mother-muskrat
And her little rattles four.
"Dive!" said the mother;
"We dive," said the four:
So they dived and they burrowed
In the reeds on the shore.
(To be continued.)

MARY'S VINE.

BY CHRISTIE PEARL.

"O mother, see! — see my vine! How it does grow! That spray is creeping up, and almost hangs over the picture of little Samuel praying. How pretty the green leaves look against the gilt frame!"

"Yes, darling: they are very pretty. Don't you remember how discouraged you were at first?"

"Oh, yes! what a time I did have! Mrs. Graham gave me a little slip; and I put it in a bottle of water, and placed it on the window where the sun would shine upon it. I thought it never would root; but it did at last, — little tiny white roots. And then I planted it in that hanging basket, and it grew and grew; and I trained it with strings; and now it's beautiful!"

"It is very pleasant to have plants and flowers in the house in winter. I brought you home last night a pink geranium and white hyacinth from Mr. Graham's conservatory; and how fragrant they make the room! I wish, darling, you could have seen it full of flowers and vines. It looked like a fairy palace in the soft lamp-light."

"Mamma, what makes all these leaves turn one way, right toward the window? They are naughty little leaves. They won't look at me at all; and I'm the little girl that tends them and loves them."

"They turn toward the sun to receive his rays. That is what makes them of such a rich green color. If they were away in the dark, they would be pale and sickly. Does that teach you any lesson?"

Mary sat a few minutes hugging her doll, and tying and untying her hat.

"No, mamma: I can't think of any lesson at all."

"Did my little girl pray this morning?"

"I said my prayers; but I did not think much about them."

"Can you be a strong, earnest little Christian if you do not 'look to Jesus'? He is our sun; and we are like little plants and flowers. If we do not turn our faces toward him, he can not shine upon us. You can feel the sunshine of his love warming up your heart when you are in earnest and look right to Jesus; can you not?"

"Yes, mamma. I feel real happy then, and don't get cross very quick. I think, 'Jesus loves me;' and it is pleasant, I am sure."

Her mother looked at her glowing cheek, and smiled lovingly.

"I hope my little girl will think of these things; that she will always be clinging and trustful like this vine; that she will let her mother lead her, and

not try to have her own way. How many things these green leaves tell us!"

Mary jumped up suddenly, stumbled over a crick-et, knocked down a chair, and ran from the room; while her mother looked after her in astonishment. She soon came rushing back, all out of breath, with a small card in her hand.

"Mamma, here it is! — 'I am the true vine; and my Father is the husbandman.'"

"So you have thought of a lesson. Mamma hopes that her child will be a living branch, and bear much fruit, — the fruit of kind words and Christ-like deeds, — fruit just as lovely, and acceptable to God, as our purple grapes are to those who love them better than anything else."

"I hope so too, mamma," said Mary very earnestly; while she hugged her doll again so tenderly, that I know, if she had not been an only child, and a little curly-haired brother or sister had been in the doll's place, she would have been just as loving and tender.

THE SAP-SIPPING FOLK.

BY MRS. HELEN F. PARKER.

Uncle Phil and the children were walking in the woods one day, when Ella called him to see a host of ants running up and down the trunk of a tree.

"What are they doing, uncle?" she asked.

"Milking their cows," was the reply.

"Ants do not keep cows," Ella remonstrated.

"Look!" said her uncle: "how lean are the ants running up the tree! and how swollen are those coming down!"

"But, Uncle Phil, there are no cows up in the tree," laughed Ella, looking at the leafy branches overhead.

"They are too small for you to see them," he replied; "yet there are vast herds pastured on the leaves. They do not give white milk, but a honey-like liquid, of which ants are very fond."

"Uncle Phil," questioned Seth, who had returned from a hunt for game, "you do not mean to say that the ants are provided with milking-stools and pails?"

"Not exactly," replied his uncle, smiling. "The ants pat the sides of the little creatures with their antennæ, and drink the sweet drops that ooze, after this coaxing, from two tubes, like tiny horns, on their backs."

"Then fall upon, and eat them up, I suppose," added Seth.

"Never!" answered his uncle. "They make pets of them, running about them in the sunshine, and driving away their enemies, carrying away their cast-off coats that they may be clean, and in every way treating them with the greatest consideration. Ants war with each other sometimes to obtain possession of them, and even make prisoners of some species that feed on roots, carrying them to their own nests in order to have a good herd for home-use."

"What are these little cows named?" asked Ella with astonishment.

"Aph-i-des," replied her uncle. "You have often seen them."

"Oh, never, I am sure!" said Ella.

"Did I not hear you cry out the other day, when picking roses, that the young shoots were covered with disgusting green lice, and you should throw all the rosebuds away?"

"Were those aphides?" cried Ella.

"Yes: one of many species."

Ella moved away from under the tree, as if to escape any danger of a shower of them upon her shoulders.

"You need not fear," said her uncle. "They hold too tightly to the leaves by their beaks, and

are too intent on sucking the sap out of them, to fall on us. They will not let go, even when swollen with over-eating, but hang by their beaks, and, with a kicking motion, throw the liquid from the tubes. The ants quickly sip it."

"Who found out all that?" asked Albert, looking in vain up in the tree.

"A blind man," said Uncle Phil.

"How odd, when we do not see them with our eyes!" said Ella.

"Huber was a great naturalist, blind from infancy; yet he first observed the facts I have told you. It is a reproof to us who have eyes. There are few plants without a colony of aphides, if we would only see them. You can, any day, if you choose, see black ones on the willows, and green ones on your mother's house-plants when she neglects them."

"I remember: they crowded all over her verbenas last winter," said Ella.

"You may well say crowded," returned her uncle.



ANT AND APHIDES, MAGNIFIED.

"One aphid will produce ninety little ones; and there may be eleven generations in one summer, — millions of them altogether. What wonder that a plant will suffer with such drainage of its juices! They are well named, from a word that means 'to exhaust.'"

"Worse than grasshoppers," said Seth. "I should think they would devour all vegetation."

"They might but for their enemies. The pretty lady-bugs, Ella, that you find on the rose-bushes, are active enemies of the aphides: so you must treasure them. There is also a green, lace-winged insect, with golden eyes, that is very destructive to them; and the ichneumon-flies are always on the alert, burying eggs in their bodies. You must learn which are the foes, and which the friends, of your plants."

(To be continued.)

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

LENA'S LITTLE SISTER.

BY DEWDROP.

"Come along, Katie. If you must go, I suppose I'll have to take care of you. But I think such little folks as you had better stay at home and play with their dolls. Come, hurry, child, or I shall be off without you."

"Lena, you were as small as Katie once, and quite as eager to go occasionally. She is old enough to enjoy and appreciate in a measure the fine panorama which is to be exhibited this afternoon. If I had leisure to go myself, you would not be troubled with the care of your little sister. I am sorry you consider her such a burden."

Mrs. Chapman spoke reproachfully, and kissed Katie tenderly as she confided her to her elder sister's keeping.

"Take good care of her, Lena; and don't trust her out of your sight."

"Mother is so afraid!" sneered Lena to her school-mate in waiting as the door closed behind them.

"Katie is big enough to take care of herself, if she only chose to think so. There's little Lu Rogers, just Katie's age, goes about the city alone, and takes care of herself like a little woman; while this foolish chick is nothing but a baby yet, and bids fair to be one for years to come."

"What's that you say?" asked Mattie Bridgman, coming up with her friends in time to hear the last remark. "Who is this baby you are speaking of?"

"Why, Katie here," pouted Lena, looking very cross. "Nell and I were depending on such a good time this afternoon! and, just at the last moment, this little minx cries to go; and mamma's baby must go, spite of every thing."

"O Lena! how can you speak so of your sweet little sister?" whispered Mattie, with a tender look at the unwelcome intruder. "Let me take care of her this afternoon; do, Lena: it will be a real pleasure." And Mattie took one of Katie's little hands within her own, and awaited her sister's consent.

"Take her then, and welcome," retorted Lena, glad to be relieved of her burden. "I guess you will be sick of your bargain," she added with a mocking laugh.

"Never fear," replied Mattie pleasantly. "I had a little sister once who was very dear to me: but God saw fit to take her when she was about Katie's age; and, oh! you do not know how I missed her, and how I love children for her sweet sake."

Mattie's eyes filled with tears; and the girls walked on in silence, as even Lena had grown thoughtful during this last observation of Mattie's. She was still somewhat sulky, however, and could not get over the feeling that children were a great trouble to elder sisters, especially when they were depending on having a good time with some chosen companion, and didn't wish to be "bothered" with the care of a younger brother or sister.

Several times that afternoon, she turned involuntarily toward Mattie Bridgman and Katie, and could not but feel a slight pang of remorse as she witnessed the kind attentions bestowed upon the little girl by her warm-hearted friend, and the pleasure depicted on the child's expressive countenance.

"O Lena! prize your little sister while you have her," was Mattie's parting injunction; "for, believe me, the care and trouble you may sometimes experience are nothing to the desolation which I, who am now sisterless, feel so keenly. Could my cherished sister but return to me, I should deem no sacrifice which I could make for her comfort too great, knowing as I now do what it is to be without a sister's love."

